

(6) encourages representatives of the private sector to coordinate with the Department of the Treasury and their subsidiaries to utilize licensing opportunities and expand access of key communications services to Iranians residing within Iran;

(7) welcomes the efforts of the international community to support protestors in Iran, including by removing Iran from the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women; and

(8) calls on the international community—
(A) to publicly condemn violence by the Iranian regime against peaceful protesters;

(B) to speak out against violations by the regime of fundamental human rights, including the freedom of expression, assembly, and redress of grievances of the Iranian people; and

(C) impose human rights sanctions on officials and entities that are responsible for the repression of current protests and involved in violating the human rights of the Iranian people.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I have two requests for committees to meet during today's session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority Leaders.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today's session of the Senate:

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, January 26, 2023, at 10:30 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, January 26, 2023, at 9 a.m., to conduct an executive business meeting.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. MANCHIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the privileges of the floor be granted to the following members of my staff: David Rosner, our detailee from FERC; and Sarah Stevenson, our American Association for the Advancement of Science, as of today until the end of Congress.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. WICKER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that Daniel Davis, my speechwriter—and invaluable member of our team—be granted floor privileges until January 27, 2023.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

UKRAINE

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, if I might be recognized, nearly 1 year ago, Russia launched an unprovoked, illegal, and brutal war of aggression

against Ukraine. In doing so, Vladimir Putin quite literally sought to wipe a sovereign nation off the map. But as the world witnessed in the months that followed, Mr. Putin had vastly underestimated the Ukrainian people and the Ukrainian leadership. Rather than capitulate, Ukrainians have resisted and saved their homeland from full-scale occupation. The courage and ingenuity shown by Ukrainian troops, many of whom were civilians before the war, continues to be nothing short of heroic.

This morning, we learned of yet another act of Russian terror in the form of a barrage of drones and missiles raining down on Kyiv. This left severe casualties. This act of brute intimidation, which has become all too common over the past year, was clearly meant to break the will of the Ukrainian people as they prepare to receive more military aid from the United States and from other allies.

Thankfully, Ukrainian forces successfully shot down the vast majority of those incoming projectiles using advanced air defense technology. This is just one more example of what many of us in this Chamber have asserted for months: If Ukrainians get the tools they need, they can finish the job and defeat Vladimir Putin.

The harsh reality is that these kinds of attacks on Ukraine, leaving a trail of casualties in their wake, have become far too common, and if leaders across the free world had acted sooner, we would be better positioned to save the lives and critical infrastructure now.

The U.S. Congress has led the world in supporting the Ukraine war effort. In fact, we have led the Biden administration—this Senate, on both sides of the aisle. On a bipartisan basis, we have provided security assistance, humanitarian aid, and direct support to Ukraine's government. Although this has amounted to tens of billions of taxpayer dollars, this is actually a bargain investment.

Let's put it in context. According to the Kiel Institute's Ukraine Support Tracker, the total U.S. contribution to Ukraine, through November of last year, amounted to only 0.2 percent of our gross domestic product. The new Congress must continue this bipartisan support for Ukraine, and I look forward to leading the charge as ranking member of the Armed Services Committee.

As the first anniversary of this war approaches, we should reflect on the progress made by Ukraine, and we should carefully consider how to help them decisively win this conflict so that a lasting peace can take root. To do so, we first need to state clearly what our American interests are in Ukraine. That is something the President and his advisers have repeatedly failed to do, choosing instead to make vague references to the rules-based international order, or words to that effect.

The American people are right to demand straight answers. With inflation

rampant, crime on the rise, and an open southern border, it is fair to ask why we should care about what happens in Ukraine.

I offer four reasons.

First, Ukraine matters because the security of Europe is closely tied to our own American security and our own American prosperity. For decades, all of our fellow citizens have benefited from peace and stability in Europe, purchased by the sacrifices of Americans in World War I and World War II. What is at stake today in Ukraine is whether the fruits of those sacrifices will continue to endure.

Allowing Putin to prevail in Ukraine would usher in a new age of chaos and instability and would invite Putin to test our resolve to defend our NATO allies. Make no mistake, Putin will push the envelope as far as we let him. His goal is to remake the old Soviet empire, and, regrettably, the West has misread and underestimated Putin's intentions for years—in 2008, when he invaded Georgia; and then in 2014, with the seizure of Crimea and parts of eastern Ukraine; and, yet again, last year in Ukraine with this full-scale invasion.

His imperial ambitions are now undeniable. If Vladimir Putin is not stopped in Ukraine, the security of the entire European continent will be put at risk.

Second, our support and the support of our allies for Ukraine has made a huge difference and has significantly weakened Russia. Thanks to the U.S. military assistance and the courage of Ukrainian troops, Russia has lost its ability to carry out near-term conventional invasions of NATO members, and we achieved that without having to send a single American soldier into combat.

The Russian losses have been massive. Last week, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, GEN Mark Milley, estimated that significantly more than 100,000 Russian troops have been killed or wounded in Ukraine during the war, not to mention thousands of combat vehicles, tanks, artillery pieces, and aircraft destroyed.

For those questioning the cost of our assistance, I would simply pose the alternative: How much would it cost in American lives and treasure to confront the Russians directly? Because that is the reality we face if Putin tests our resolve to defend NATO. From that perspective, we are getting one heck of a deal by helping Ukraine do its own fighting.

Third, our support for Ukraine is prompting European countries to take more responsibility for their own security, something we have long urged them to do. Republican and Democrat Presidents alike have long believed that Europeans should take the lead on European security. I agree. Almost every American agrees.

Thanks to our example, our NATO allies are now spending tens of billions more on defense, much of which will be